"To promote Christian ideals for agriculture and rural life; to interpret the spiritual and religious values which inhere in the processes of agriculture and the relationships of rural life; to magnify and dignify the rural church; to provide a means of fellowship and cooperation among rural agencies: *Toward a Christian Rural Civilization.*"

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LIBRARY SCHOOL RELIGION

The Christian Church and Human Integration —One People

By Henry S. Randolph*

The world has been shrinking until it has become "one" in physical fact. We are now integral and dependent parts of a "one world," one people, one society. We have moved onto each other's reservations. We know that our comfort and security are involved in whatever happens in Korea, Iran, Egypt, or any other part of the world. Therefore, integration involves membership in a world society. However, the fact remains that we have not yet become one community, recognizing common involvements in common problems, seeking cooperative solutions.

We have spent so much of our energies in finding expedient solutions to immediate problems that we have not created long-range perspective. Frequently our local or tribal "rights," as we understand them, have obscured the needs and legitimate wants of others in the world as well as our own permanent best interest. But however much we preach and teach this "one world" concept and the need for all human beings to be an integral part of it, we shall never achieve it by endowment, through gifts of land, water, cattle, favoring legislation, not even by gifts of schools or churches. However these things might appear to aid, not much of permanent value to mankind can be expected from these gifts if they are bestowed upon the people by a benevolent government, society, or church unless there be corresponding earned values on the part of the people.

Sometimes I fear we have had too many agencies helping the American Indian too much, doing for him too many of the things he should be doing for himself. By so doing we have lifted from him the obligations and responsibilities which are intrinsically his. As a human being he cannot make progress in integration without experiencing the value of personal and community responsibility. The church is interested in all of life, the creation and development of that life in all of its relations, to the end that every person shall be a

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* Keynote address made at the opening session of the Triennial Conference of the National Fellowship of Indian Workers, June 30, 1952, Green Lake, Wisconsin. Dr. Randolph is Secretary for Rural and Indian Work, Board of National Missions, Presbyterian Church, U.S.A.

happy, creative, and productive agent in society. This is integration. This is social and spiritual completeness.

Jesus, living among his friends and neighbors in a face-to-face living communal relationship, showed himself a master teacher. He helped them to come to grips with their problems -- hunger, thirst, want, poverty, crime, politics, economics, and spiritual values -- he led them to see life in its wholeness and fullness. In this human relationship Jesus dissipated shadows, gloom, disappoir ment, displacing them with a radiant light of hope, anticipation, and expectancy -- yokes easier, burdens lighter, new values, human-spiritual values -- tied in intimately with their daily way of life.

The darkest days in the history of the Church were not the days of pagan persecution under Nero but rather those days and years when the Church withdrew from life, from the community of people, and endeavored to protect itself and to preserve its purity behind stained glass windows and beneath the shadows of cloistered halls. Those were dark days, indeed, when dogmas, creeds, and pagan myths became more important than living people.

The light of the Church shone with its greatest brilliance when the re formers of different ages wrested the Church from its traditional patterns of be havior and from the hands of its professional theologians and gave it back into the hands of the people. Then, void of a dominant emphasis upon dogmas and the unearthly, yet with a dynamic program geared to the future but close to the soil and human life, the Church glowed with power and force, saving its people realis tically through its radiant and certain solution of human problems.

Whenever and wherever the Church or any social institution or group or tribe of people isolates itself from the human community, it falls beneath a shadow. It begins to decay and rot within. There is no power within it for growth, to heal a sick people, to feed the hungry. And there is no salvation to the desert-bound lost souls. Isolated from people the church's sole comfort is in a vain, pious, and vague philosophy, wishing for the rock to yield water, for the coming of a benevolent Lord who will fill outstretched hands with manna, or for a picturesque heaven for eternal abode, thus escaping all the problems and tragedies of the earth-bound. Human integration or human completeness can never be achieved in this mystical fashion. It is achieved only through persons and cooperative achievement at the cost of hard, thoughtful, and successful labo

Jehovah provided a promised land for his people but the trail to it had to be made by the people through forty years of hard and treacherous travel over barren wastes, learning how to live, travel, and work cooperatively in a daily face-to-face human community with Jehovah at its center. It was out of such stuff as this that Jehovah created the Hebrew nation. It was not until the Hebrews lost all sense of the values of the human community and came to depend upon outside resources that the Hebrew nation disintegrated and was lost.

FREEDOM -- A BASIC FACTOR IN HUMAN INTEGRATION

A basic factor in human integration is freedom. It was said, "The truth shall make you free." Where is that truth? Is it something someone spoke A pronouncement by a government official? A law passed by Congress? Or a resolution passed by a church body?

Our country from its inception has struggled for freedom. We have im-

plemented this struggle by revolutionary and civil wars, by mob action, by legislation, by the organization and promotion of societies for freedom, social and human rights, by overtures and memorials to national councils, and by resolutions and directives by both civil and religious organizations. Many times these noble efforts have been disappointing. For permanent and satisfying freedom has never come from them, and it can never be purchased or bestowed in this manner.

FREEDOM -- A HUMAN-SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE

Real freedom is a human-spiritual experience -- a communal function. It is an experience initiated for and by the people, achieving objectives which they hold in high value.

We are more than social atoms in the sweep of cosmic immensity. We are more than helpless victims of society. We are men -- Americans all -- with full rights of American citizenship to claim.

We should not wish to be "kept citizens," humbled and dulled by having the Federal government look after us. We should want to take the calculated risk, to dream and to build, to fail and to succeed. We should refuse to trade incentive for a dole.

We should prefer the challenges of life to the guaranteed existence, the thrill of fulfillment to the calm state of Utopia. We should not trade freedom for beneficence nor our dignity for a hand-out. We should never cower before any master nor bend to any threat. It is our heritage as Americans to stand erect, brave, and unafraid, to think and act for ourselves and the common good, to share with all others the fruit of our labors and the joys of our creations and to face the world boldly and say, "This we have achieved."

A good illustration of what I mean by integration through freedom was reported in The Saturday Evening Post, March 29, 1952, by Joseph Stocker in an article which he titled, "Arizona's New Indian Uprising," with the subtitle, "Savage and free, they roamed the Southwest until we reduced them to beggary, hand-outs, and despair. Then, two years ago, the Pima-Maricopas declared independence of the Great White Father. Now their bustling prosperity makes some white men look primitive."

The story Mr. Stocker tells is a story of how a community of Indian people achieved freedom of economic action from a well-meaning but irksome paternalism, supervision, and direction on the part of the government. It was a bloodless revolution. The Pimas and Maricopas, as a communal group, were studying their economic and social problems. Strong leaders emerged, preaching a gospel of freedom. They evolved a Five-Year Plan for attaining self-government in progressive stages.

They became dissatisfied with the way the U.S. Office of Indian Affairs was running their big farm in the fertile Salt River Valley. The farm operation was costing money. The people claimed that the last year the government operated the farm they lost $4,530.00. This fact in hand, and with a conviction that the farm should be making a good annual profit, they elbowed the government management out and took over complete control, employing Mr. Flood, an educated Indian, as farm manager. They improved and extended the acreage of the farm, now 1,600 acres. They enlarged their herd of cattle.

During the first year of operation under Indian management the farm produced a net profit of $25,403.70. This, their second year, promises a gross income of $100,000.00.

But the value of this revolution cannot be measured by thousands of dollars of new farm income but rather by the new spirit of the people. Hear their Council chairman, Billman Hayes, speak, "It just proves that if Indians want to do things for themselves, and if they get busy, they can succeed." They now know that they can go to a local bank and borrow money direct for their operations and do it quickly, without filling out endless forms and without waiting months as they formerly did in dealing through the government Indian Agency. This has given them a new sense of self-respect and personal worth.

A community fervor has taken the place of the old lethargy. They now know that they can do things on their own, and they are undertaking new things every day. They are winning their freedom and thereby finding themselves integrated into a cooperative communal body with potential for new life. Yes, out of bondage into life; out of segregation into integration.

It has been reported that a "Community Development Workshop" was held earlier this month in Brigham City, Utah. This would appear to be an excellent educational technique for furthering the spirit of freedom and the enrichment of communal life among Indian people. In this conference it was especially noted that the Navajos in the Gallup region are operating a furniture factory, using timber cut from tribal forests near Fort Defiance and processed in a Navajo sawmill.

Indians on the Rosebud Reservation in South Dakota have a cooperative grocery store, started with initial capital of $200.00. It now has stocks and assets valued at $10,000.00.

DARING LEADERSHIP A REQUISITE

Since integration is a human, communal, spiritual experience, the Christian church may well be the midwife at its birth if it is the center of the life of the community. The community-centered church has at its command principles and methods with which to forge a satisfying human integration, whether it be in the area of social injustice, inequality of opportunity, or economic need. This road to human integration may be a long, long one for it involves a learning process. Integration is achieved through learning how to live and living in a community of people. It requires high adventure, daring, and hard work. It may involve cracking the old traditions and mastering new methods.

Those church leaders who would depart from the usual church patterns and seriously undertake a program of leadership for the total integration of a community of people are not infrequently charged with infidelity to their ministerial charges. It has been said of them that they are doing things that should be left to others, outside the church, and that they should give their time sole to saving lost souls. Such narrow pious critics of the brave spirits who dare to preach, teach, and practice a gospel for community evangelism, involving all the human implications of the Gospel, forget that Jesus of Nazareth was greatly concerned about the total well-being of man, his health and wealth, food, shelter, and clothing as well as all his human relations in the community.

"THE LORD HELPS THOSE WHO HELP THEMSELVES"

A few years ago I visited Nova Scotia in eastern Canada on the Atlantic seaboard. Here I saw a people, largely fishermen, who had known ignorance, hunger, cold, and isolation. Like so many of our Indian people they had become enslaved socially, culturally, economically, and spiritually. They had lost their independence. They had lived in this condition for more than a century. It delighted me to see how they had successfully broken their bonds and become free, independent people knowing the full worth of life in an integrated community.

This new state of welfare was not produced by war nor by a resolution passed by some benevolent group interested in human rights, nor was it brought about by barrels of clothing, discarded by rich benefactors and collected by missionary societies for poor people. No, there were no hand-outs; there were no grants of money. These people freed themselves through self-education and self-designed, cooperative, communal action toward mutual aid. They were guided by well-laid strategy on the part of wise church leaders.

How did it happen?

They educated themselves, meeting in small groups frequently around the kitchen stove. In fact, the movement was called "The Kitchen University." It was here in the kitchen or in the boats where men mended their fishing nets that they studied their problems and needs. They needed better markets for their fish and lobsters, for their pulpwood and farm products. They needed better equipment. They studied about cooperatives, how to get around middlemen. There was great elation when they cooperatively packed their first box of lobsters and shipped them to a Boston consumer. But that was nothing compared with the rejoicing when they got a check for the shipment and found it was more than twice as much as they had gotten before for the same amount of lobster when sold to middlemen. This song of rejoicing was echoed all up and down the shores of Nova Scotia.

More lobsters were packed and shipped cooperatively with increasingly better prices. They became their own middlemen, buying directly from factories rope, sailcloth, oil, and gasoline and selling their products directly to consumers. Soon cooperative packing houses were built. I was in one of these houses -- built, owned, and operated by the people. It contained large vats filled with salt curing codfish.

One of the fishermen showing me around climbed a ladder and pulled out a big piece of fat codfish from one of the vats, broke it open, held it to my nose, and said, "Smell." "It smells good," said he. I did not need it so close to me to detect the odor. Not satisfied, he tore out a hunk of the fish as big as my fist and said, "Eat." I was not at all in the mood to eat. I was thoroughly nauseated. I needed fresh air. But I did eat it. He was telling me all the time about the superiority of their salt codfish.

This man, with all his fellows, felt no inferiority now as they once did in the days of their dependence. He now feels his independence and freedom among men to talk about his people and the superior worth of their products. They discovered how to do things together. They aided each other. They learned new skills in fishing and trading. They had more money. They discovered how to use their money cooperatively. They bought books to read. They built schools for their children, built roads, improved their homes and churches.

Before this renaissance these people had lived segregated lives in a disorganized community. But under this Christian leadership which broke sharply with the traditions of the church, the people were reborn into a communal life in which they learned to study and think about their problems, to feel and plan together for a richer pattern of life. They learned how to assume collective responsibility for their mutual welfare. They created for themselves new productive and consumer values which ultimately became the core of the good life for them. In this new communal process I found the people happy and enthusiastic. They were conscious of having achieved freedom and community integration through self-initiative, self-created values and authority, and sufficient controls to determine their own destiny. They lived in a self-created and integrated Christian community. In all this the church provided the prophet, the strategy, and the initial education. The people did the rest. They helped themselves, and the Lord helped.

THE LITTLE SHEPHERD OF BIG LICK

Some of you know the story of Big Lick, Tennessee. This is a community down in the mountains of middle Tennessee. Here the land is poor and the people are poor. It has been described as the "land of do without." Here again the people through their own initiative and creativeness under the prophetic and daring leadership of a great man of God, Eugene Smathers -- "the Little Shepherd of Big Lick" -- lifted themselves in a relatively short period of time out of a seventeenth century pattern of life into our modern day.

Here too, around the old kitchen stove in winter and under the shade of a tree in summer in serious group study, these people of Big Lick discovered their needs and how to meet them. They discovered that they needed a grain drill in the community. No one farmer was able to buy one. But they were learning how to do things together. They saved and pooled their pennies, nickels, and dimes until they had enough money to buy their grain drill, the first ever to come into the community. All the farmers used it. This led to the organization of the Farmers' Cooperative Association of Big Lick. In the same manner the association acquired a farm tractor, a sawmill, and other farm machinery.

These people were also learning how to improve their soil, crops, and livestock. New crops, such as strawberries and peanuts and improved cattle, were introduced. Their Farmers' Cooperative Association found markets for their farm products, which were carefully shipped to nearby cities and sold at top prices direct to consumers. Through the cooperative they bought their farm seed and fertilizers direct from wholesale houses by the truckload, thus bypassing the middleman. These mutual efforts enabled the people to make money and to save money such as they had never before known. The Big Lick people found themselves better fed, better clothed, and their homes improved.

Early in this process they built their beautiful stone church. They gathered the stone from their farms and hauled it to the church site by wagon. And with great devotion they shaped these stones into a sanctuary, placed upon it a cross, and named it Calvary Church. This church then became the center of life in the Big Lick community. Here the people met to worship God, to learn about his word, to plan for further home and community development. It was here that the people met for play and to find fellowship. It was here that the group continued to meet to study their problems.

It was in these groups that the House of Health and the whole community health program, including a trained nurse, was envisioned and later realized. It was here they discovered that most of their young people were leaving the community for jobs in distant cities. And they likewise discovered a solution to this problem resulting in a church homesteading project, settling some thirty young families on family farms in the community, aiding them to build their homes, barns, and to get started in farming. All these young people would have been lost to the community without this noble adventure.

Through the youth work camps at Big Lick the people came to know and love young people of many races and nationalities -- Negroes, Chinese, Japanese, Koreans.

This has been a twenty-one-year program of advance for the Big Lick community. They have won for themselves an unusual sort of freedom which gave them power to plan and determine their own destinies with controls over their community in terms of health, soil, forests, crops, livestock, farm machinery, home development, and even racial prejudice. They studied together, taught each other, planned together, and worked together as a communal group. Through their mutual aid efforts they brought into their community and homes the benefits derived from modern scientific technology in agriculture and community development by way of T.V.A. and other national and state agencies.

It will ever be remembered that the church was first and at the center of all that has been done at Big Lick. This community is repeatedly cited by Christian leaders, sociologists, and human philosophers and is written into the pages of their books as an illustration of how to rebuild the American rural community.

Dr. Baker Brownell in his very recent book, The Human Community, wrote of Eugene Smathers, "His work continues; as a symbol it has great significance. As a pilot project in what the church may do to the rural community, its importance can hardly be overestimated. It has remained in the American pattern. It has done no more than common sense would affirm. But love and intelligence pervade the project. Above all is the conviction of the central importance of the true community in religious life."

Whenever a church under a prophetic ministry operates in this fashion in any community, it unquestionably fulfills its mission for it is "the light of the world" and its light cannot be put out. For that light has brought new vision and new living truth which binds man to man into an integral human community. Our people must control their own destinies and thereby enrich their spiritual, cultural, social, and economic values.

When this community of human integration is extended throughout the world, we shall have what Jesus of Nazareth proclaimed, "The kingdom of God" -- thy kingdom come...thy people one...thy will be done.

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